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The 'Virtuoso' Troyanovsky: A U.N. Finale

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UNITED NATIONS, N.Y., Feb. 14 — Diplomats here often tell the story about a Security Council meeting six years ago when Maoists disguised as photographers suddenly doused the Soviet chief delegate, Oleg A. Troyanovsky, with red paint.

Some delegates panicked, thinking a bomb had been thrown. But the Soviet envoy looked up and said in impeccable English, "Better red than dead."

The story is a perfect example of the wit and genial aplomb that have made Mr. Troyanovsky one of the most respected and well-liked diplomats at the United Nations.

After nine years at the head of the

largest mission here, Mr. Troyanovsky suddenly announced this week that he would give up his post. He returned to Moscow today.

Western diplomats said he would be greatly missed.

"I regret very much that he is leaving," said the Danish chief delegate, Ole Bierring. "He has been a very able Ambassador, with a lot of sense of humor — really delightful to work with."

Herbert S. Okun, Washington's deputy representative at the United Nations, said: "He's a pro's pro — a virtuoso performer for the Soviet Union. He is a smart, respected adversary."

Considered an exceptionally astute observer of Western affairs, Mr. Troyanovsky is rare among Soviet officials in that he spent much of his childhood in the United States. His father, Aleksandr, was the Soviet Ambassador to this country from 1933 to 1939, and the younger Mr. Troyanovsky studied at the Quaker Preparatory School in Washington and at Swarthmore College.

Mr. Troyanovsky speaks English with only the faintest trace of an accent. He is famous for blending American expressions and anecdotes about life here into his conversations, even throwing in a joke now and then about American stereotypes of "Communist

Russia."

"If anything mattered on my departure here, my Government would have let me stay longer — or remove me earlier," he said at an informal gathering with reporters Tuesday, emitting a deep, husky burst of laughter.

The envoy, a perpetual smile on his face, seemed infinitely more at ease than his expressionless aides as he fiddled with a microphone and begged a cigarette from a reporter.

But he never dropped his diplomatic guard, continually turning his remarks back to nuclear disarmament, which is perhaps the Soviet Union's favorite topic at the United Nations.

Born in Moscow on Nov. 24, 1919, Mr. Troyanovsky moved to Japan at the age of 8 when his father was appointed Ambassador there. He graduated from the Moscow Institute for Foreign Lan-

guages and worked for Tass, the official Soviet press agency, at the beginning of World War II.

After a two-year stint as an intelligence officer, he joined the Soviet foreign service in 1944.

Mr. Troyanovsky held posts at Soviet Missions in London and at the United Nations, rising to become an assistant to the Foreign Minister in 1963, then an assistant to Nikita S. Khrushchev in 1968.

He accompanied Mr. Khrushchev on trips to Britain, the United States, Indonesia, France and Austria, and he was one of 12 officials who were co-authors of "Face to Face With America," a book published in 1969 on Mr. Khrushchev's visit to this country.

Thought to be one of the Soviet foreign service's most expert linguists, Mr. Troyanovsky is said to have used

his linguistic skills as well as his understanding of Western ways to translate Mr. Khrushchev's harsh, provocative remarks into more diplomatic language during the trip.

Mr. Troyanovsky was the Soviet Union's Ambassador to Japan from 1967 to 1976, developing a reputation as an enthusiastic tennis player.

He upheld the image this week, telling reporters he would miss the United States Open tennis tournament most upon his departure and would recommend to his successor that he take up tennis.

"On the whole, I like this country and its people," he said.

"The United Nations is a very addictive place," he said, "and it will take me some time to get unused to it."